

Greetings

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

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**Thesis Adviser
Alfredo Marin-Carle**

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Alfredo A. Marin-Carle". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Alfredo" and the last name "Marin-Carle" clearly distinguishable.

**Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana**

May 2002

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abstract

The development of the “well said” greeting card line comprised the design of the line’s logo, 20 greeting cards, envelopes, and a free-standing fixture for the cards’ display. Emphases within the process were quotation selection, photography and image manipulation, design, the balancing of form with function in construction, and the maintenance of coherence between two- and three-dimensional components. Research into currently marketed comparable lines was also involved. Although the project does not focus heavily on marketing, the cards and accompanying materials are designed with specific intent to appeal to a young, modern demographic. The “well said” greeting card line is meant to illustrate the power of language and structure as imagery, art, and emotion.

acknowledgments

- I owe great thanks to Mr. Alfredo Marin-Carle for advising me throughout the process of developing this project. Thank you for your guidance and willingness to take on the role of adviser.
- My dad, Max, was integral in my selection of the proper materials, tools, and methods of construction for the display. Without his advice, I would likely still have a big pile of wood and screws lying on my floor.
- In the construction of the display, many individuals are responsible for making the process much less laborious than it surely would have been without their help.

Tool Acquisition	Beth Singleton Mark Rohlfing Neil Kring
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Manual laborers	Bob Mattax Matthew O’Connor Tara Gerber Ben Buehler Beth Singleton Nicholas Valliere
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- Thanks also go to Natalie Downs, Christy Shelburne, and Lisa Coomer for their lending of photographs and photography equipment.

Greetings

the inspiration and intention

During the summer of 2001, I happened across a line of greeting cards called “Quotable Cards” in an Indianapolis antique mall. The display of contemporary cards was situated amidst various collectibles, seeming slightly out of place. Yet, the cards’ powerful verbal imagery cut through the clutter of the store and drew attention to the sole card fixture. Each card held a quotation on the front, often with no background image, allowing the messages to come across strongly and clearly. From Emily Dickinson’s “Dwell in possibility” to a multi-line passage from a Thoreau work, the cards spouted the direction, inspiration, and personal opinions of numerous authors, poets, and political figures. Having not encountered such a line of cards before and having an interest in greeting card design, the wheels began turning in my head for a thesis that would involve the creation of my own line of cards, fashioned after “Quotable Cards.” This project would involve the design of a logo, cards, envelopes, and a free-standing display.

In addition to allowing me to explore greeting card development, the project would serve to enhance my general understanding of design and layout software programs by allowing me a flexible environment in which to explore their capabilities. Although my courses in advertising have given me practice in using the applications, this thesis would allow me to hone these skills and build upon them. In addition, it would give me the chance to work in three dimensions, as opposed to the two dimensions on which the majority of emphasis is placed in the advertising sequence. I have always enjoyed building things away from a computer screen, and constructing an actual retail display would provide an opportunity to learn about the design of such structures, the tools required for their assembly, and the materials used in the build. The display is a chance to apply the design principles I have learned through working in two dimensions to a new area of design.

the research

In preparation for the actual design of the cards and display, I locally visited several typical retail locations to which one would go in search of greeting cards, ensuring that a wide variety of cards would be represented by my sampling of retailers. At Borders, Hallmark, Meijer, and Gordon's Flowers, I inspected the availability of cards similar in style to those of "Quotable Cards." Although many lines proved unique in their dimensions, die cuts, inks, and messages, none held the attention-grabbing punch of the "Quotable Cards." Their copy, even with the aid of unique visual elements, did not differentiate itself from the typical greeting card sentiments. Especially interesting to me was that even the cards obviously targeted toward a younger, modern consumer, lacked the edginess required to make this target market stop and take notice.

After researching the area locations that sell "Quotable Cards," I also visited the Fort Wayne Museum of Art, which currently carries the line. The purpose of this visit was to explore more in depth the card designs and the structure in which they are sold. I discovered that, contrary to my previous assumption, the displays in which these cards are sold are not designed by the company, but are, rather, generic displays utilized by the outlets. At the FWMA, the same type of display used for the "Quotable Cards" was used for several other lines. It was a white, plastic display with an institutional feel that lacked any of the artistic expression found in the cards. In fact, a portion of the fixture holding the "Quotable Cards" was occupied by cards of a different company. The appearance of two different lines of cards in one display detracted immensely from the power of the cards themselves. Whereas the cards in Indianapolis, which occupied their own display, exhibited unity with the display, the cards in Fort Wayne were not attention-grabbing, simply because of their poor placement within a fixture. This experience emphasized the importance of a card's visual display and influenced me to place much more focus on the design of the display structure than I had originally planned.

the target market

It is important to note that this project is not rooted in marketing principles, but in an exploration of design and construction. However, the necessity that the final product

be marketable cannot be overlooked in its creation if the design process is to have purpose beyond pure design. Every component of the “well said” greeting card line is tailored toward a young, modern, expressive consumer. This individual enjoys individuality and expressiveness, therefore being likely to give cards to friends or family members for no particular reason other than to communicate with them through a means other than everyday conversation. The target consumer is also intelligent, creating value for cards that hold literary or political quotations. Finally, the target consumer is, as a part of his/her modern nature, aware of the current state of fashion. These cards, with their simple nature of design yet insightful and often assertive messages, will resonate with an audience that values a modern, fresh approach to various aspects of their lives.

the quotation selection

The first step in beginning the cards was selection of suitable quotations. In selecting quotations, I consulted several compilation books, reading over 3,000 quotations. Many of the compilations focused on literary or artistic personalities or on issues of political interest, in keeping consistent with the target market. I specifically looked for quotations that stood out from the rest as being more saleable in greeting card form. In determining this saleable status, quotations had to meet many or all of these criteria:

- 1.) Applicable to many situations. I decided to leave the inside of the cards blank in order to further facilitate this goal. Because the intended audience values individuality, a blank inside is valuable in allowing them to take ownership of the card and tailor it to their individual purposes. By sticking to quotations that have wide applicability, the target market is better served.

2. Poignant. Basically, this is the previously discussed edginess. The quotations must say something and say it in a manner that speaks directly to the reader. The words should often be able to stand on their own without concomitant images and remain attractive to the target audience. As I read through quotations, I found that a large proportion were, indeed, powerful to the extent that I felt an image would actually detract

from their message. Thus, I decided to devote several of the cards solely to text without images.

3. Prompting further thought. As discussed, the target market is intelligent and educated. They enjoy the challenge to think, and a quotation that takes them into further thought on a matter is one that will have special appeal.

4. Lending of self to graphic image. Although the ability of the words to stand on their own is stressed, images would be a part of several cards in the line. Therefore, a quotation's compatibility with a certain image was also a factor in selection. For example, one quotation selected involved a man walking, allowing for the incorporation of such a photo into the card design.

the logo design

The "well said" logo utilizes a simple sans serif as well as a boxy, courier-style font. This combination, used with varying shades of black, projects a modern feel. The straight lines on the left and upper edges of the letters add to the right angles that will characterize the project. The name itself, "well said," was selected in an effort to convey the idea that the cards feature quotations, while implying the power that the spoken (or written) word possesses when used effectively.

the card design

The card designs fall into two basic categories: those with photographic images and those without. After selecting quotations, I shot photographs that I believed would suit individual quotations well. I then modified the images in Photoshop, often manipulating the brightness and contrast levels to provide a visual tone representative of the accompanying words. For the cards that I believed stood better without images, font selection and manipulation required even greater attention. I utilized size, color, and other text attributes to make the text as communicative as possible. When using color, I was careful to maintain unity among the cards and the display; shades of blues, greens, and purples were the predominant colors used, along with much gray. The blues and

greens further contributed to the earthy, simple feel, appealing to the target audience, that is carried into the display design. The cards are all 5" x 5" squares, dimensions chosen to add to the feel of modern simplicity of design. On the back of the cards, the logo, contact information, and bar code are placed in the lower third of the card. The envelopes, too, are simple in design. The front bears a notice of the extra postage required for its dimensions, and the back is plain except for a logo extending from the folding flap in a die cut. This placement is unique, thus appealing to the target audience, yet it remains simple.

Software utilized in designing the cards included Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Freehand, and Macromedia FreeHand.

the display design and construction

As mentioned in explanation of the card designs, the display's simplicity is essential in providing an attractive, cohesive unit of retail sale. A combination of light wood and metals was chosen to present the desired tone: the wood gives a natural, simple appearance, while the metal builds on that appearance by giving it a simultaneous contemporary flair. In keeping with the modern, simple context, right angles were emphasized throughout the display. The logo placed at the top includes metal rods placed at right angles. The arms of the display protrude from a 4" x 4" post at right angles. The cards are held in boxes that feature several right angles, formed by the placement of metal backings and front plates. The base, too, consists of right angles formed by the assembly of 2" x 2"s. However, the letters of the logo topping the display provide contrast, being of a lowercase face. In repeating these curves, the base is supported by four rounded metal pipes, providing added unity to the structure.

No subject headings are incorporated into the display because of the broad applicability of each card, catering to the previously discussed individuality of the target market.

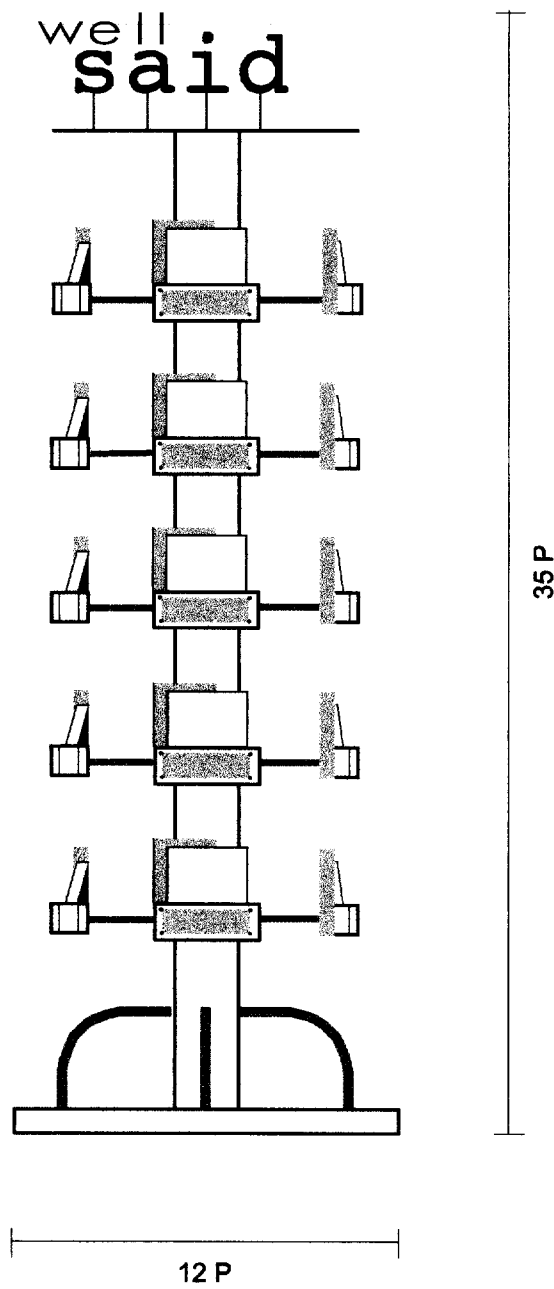
Materials used in construction of the display include basic hardware, ½" EMT conduit (display arms), conduit elbows (base supports), aluminum flashing (card box front plates and backings, logo), birch, and black paint.

the byproducts

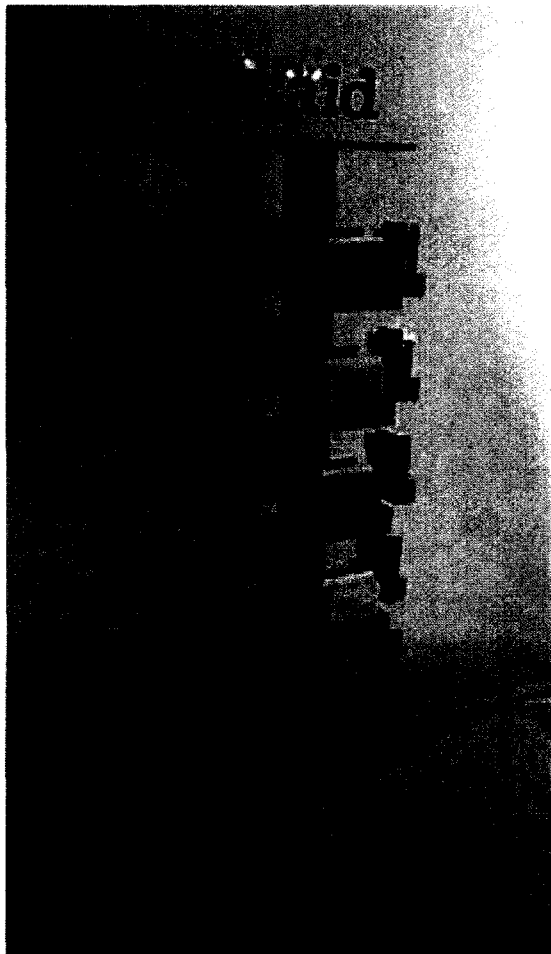
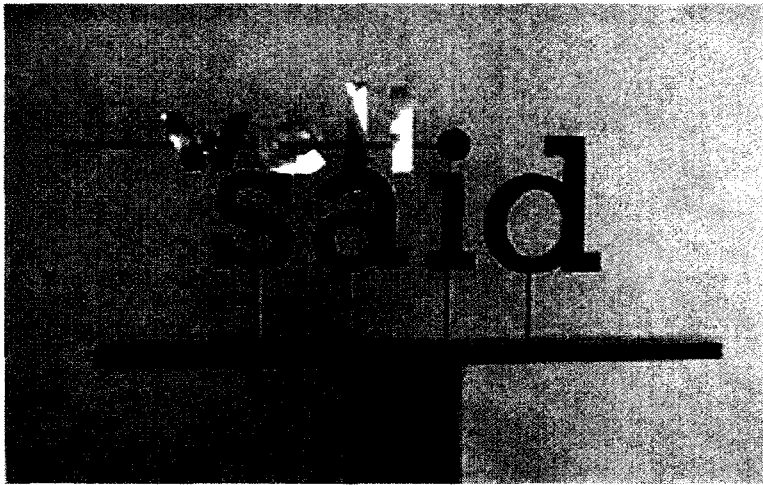
There were things that developed from this thesis that I had not specifically anticipated at its inception but in which I have taken pleasure, so I thought I would briefly share them in this final section. First, in noting the sources of quotations studied, I encountered several works that piqued my interest. For example, I am interested in death penalty debate, and several of the writings from which explored quotations were taken were discussions by authorities on the topic. Because I came across so many works that were relevant to my interests, I compiled a future reading list based on selected quotations taken from the works.

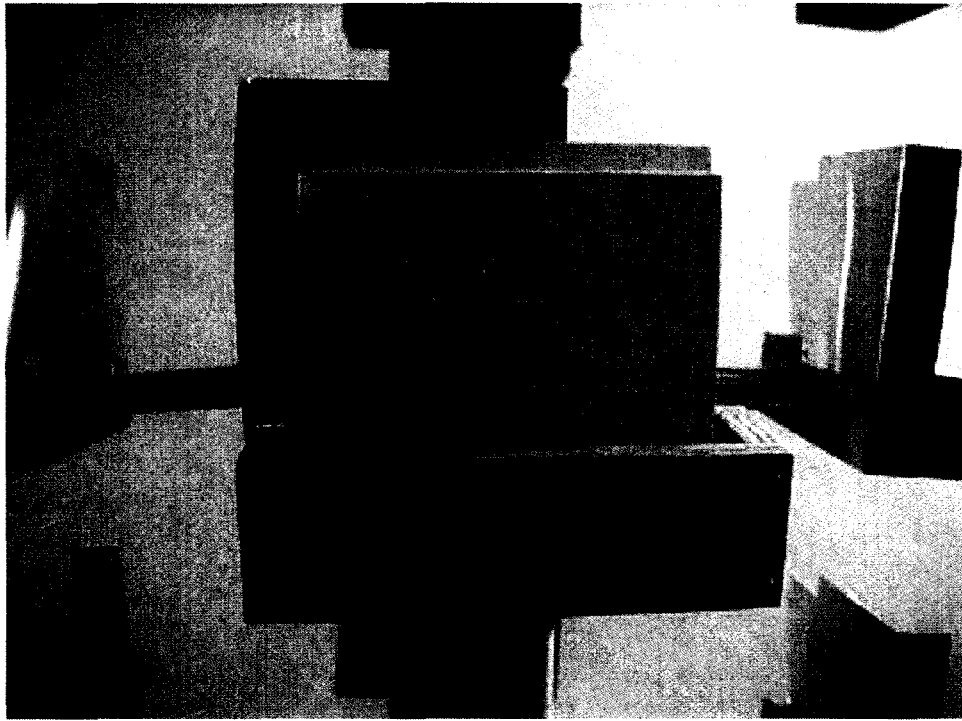
Next, I expected to learn techniques for working with woods and metals, but I did not anticipate learning as much as I did about the actual tools used. In several trips to Lowe's and Menards for equipment (and returns of equipment when I several times purchased the wrong thing), I ended up having conversations with the employees, gaining information on different types of drill bits, the specific functions of different types of nails and screws, etc. The project allowed me not only to learn how to use the tools, but to learn about the tools, their various parts, and how they function with different types of hardware.

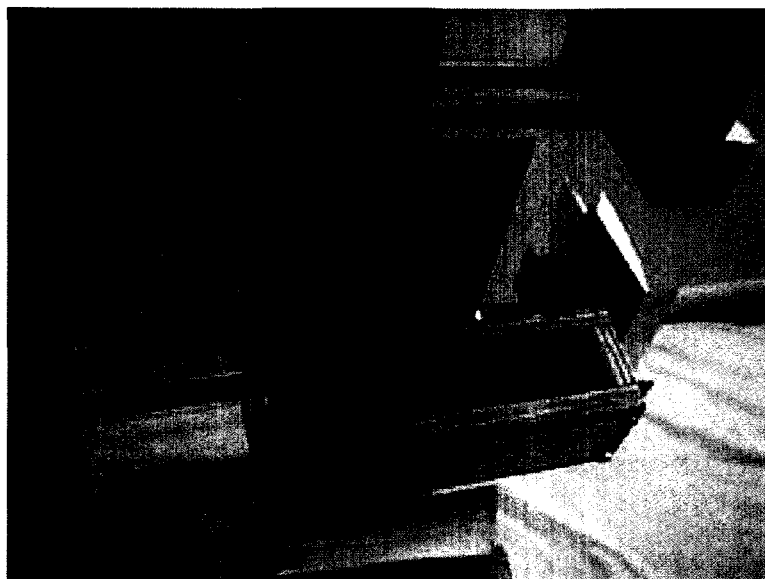
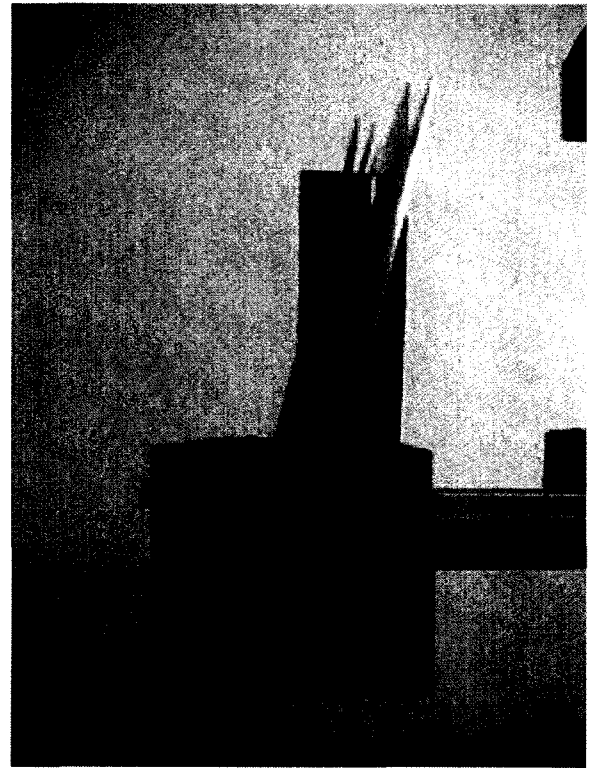
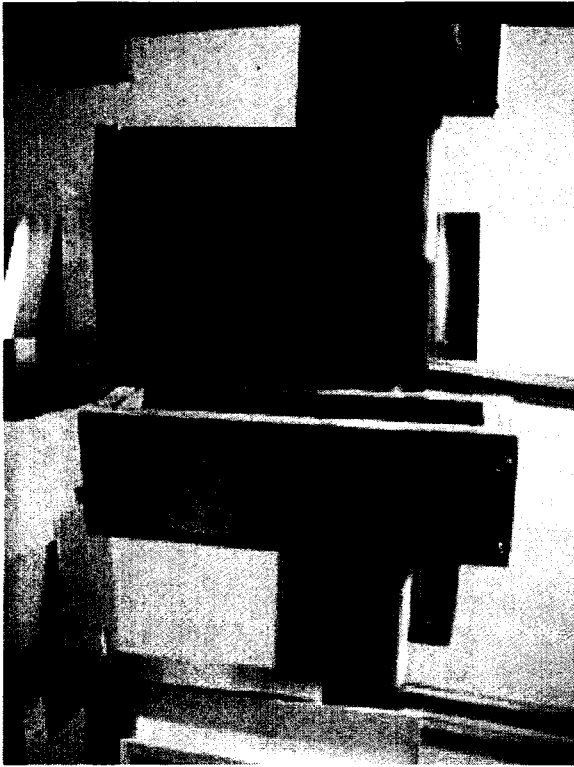
Finally, reading through quotation after quotation, I came across a number of words whose meanings I did not know. I do not like to pass by unfamiliar words, so I pulled out the dictionary and began a vocabulary list of these words and their definitions. I now have a stockpile of terms that I likely will not be using any time soon but that I hopefully will be able to recognize in the future. This was exciting for me, because I like words. When the right ones are found, any message can be powerfully communicated and any greeting, creatively sent.

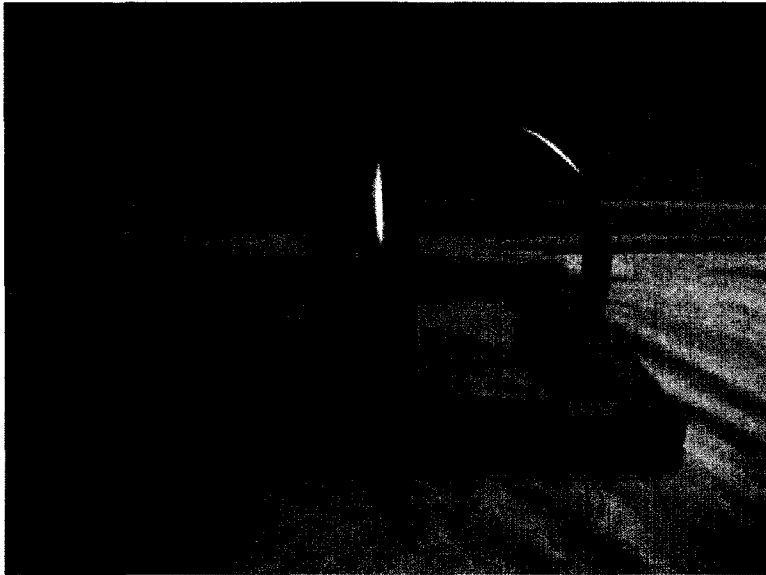


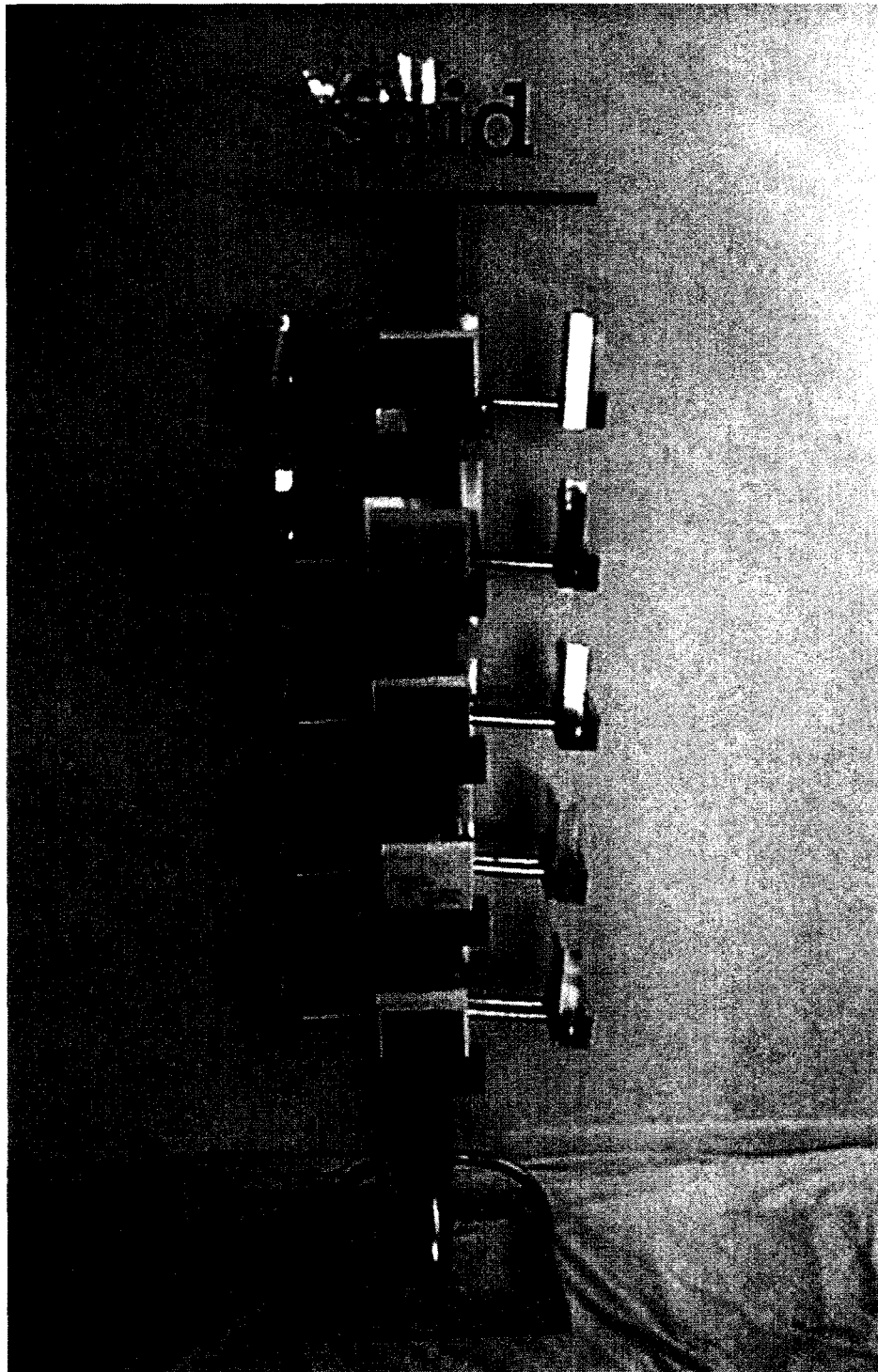
6 P = 1 ft











So whether the
world is going
to pieces
or not ... take life for
what it is,

have fun,
spread joy^{and}
confusion

Henry Miller, Sextet

well
said

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said

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is a certain inborn suffering derived from the sight of and excessive meditation upon the beauty of the opposite sex, which causes each one to wish above all things the embraces of the other and by common desire to carry out all of love's precepts in the other's embrace.

against the assault of laughter
nothing can stand.

When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives means the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand. The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing and face with us the reality of our powerlessness, that is a friend who cares.

deliberation is the
act of many; action
is the act of one.

Every now and then
a man's mind is
stretched
by a new idea and
never shrinks back to
its original proportion.

There can be no understanding between the
hands and the brain unless the
heart acts as the mediator.



somewhat higher.

him to put the other

foot long enough to enable

but only to hold a man's

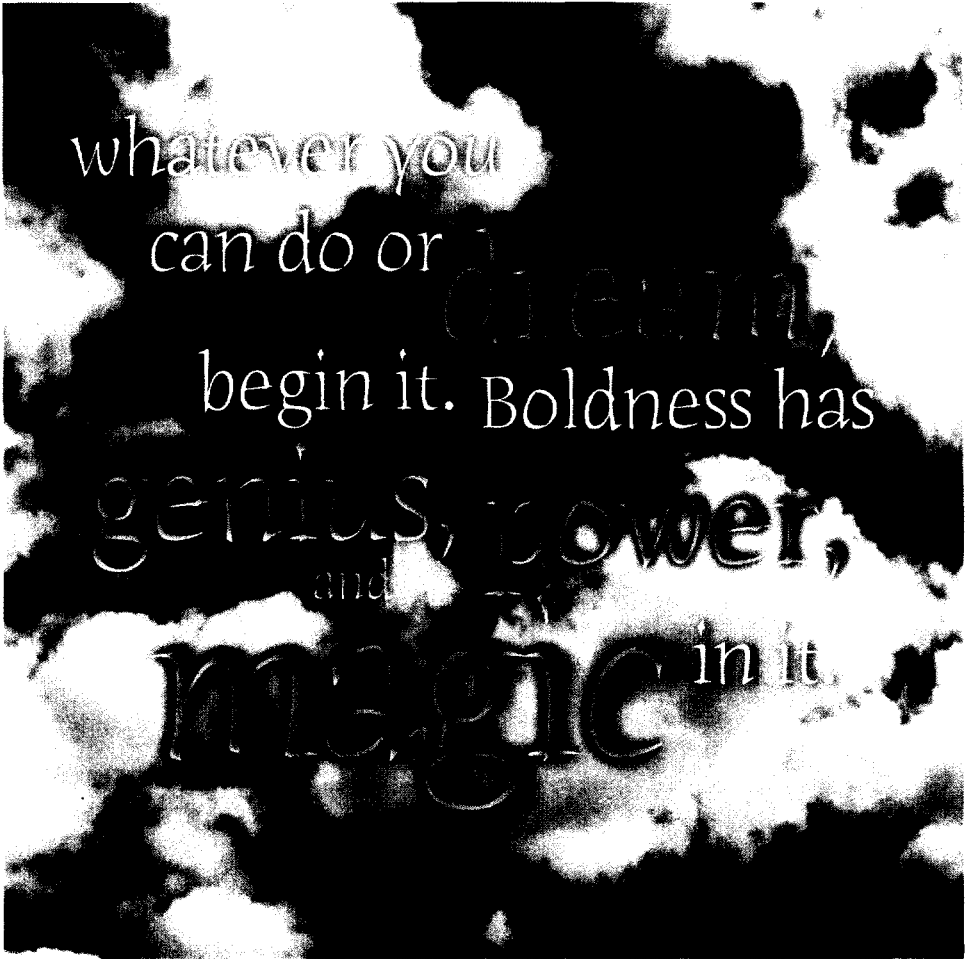
never meant to rest upon,

the rung of a ladder was

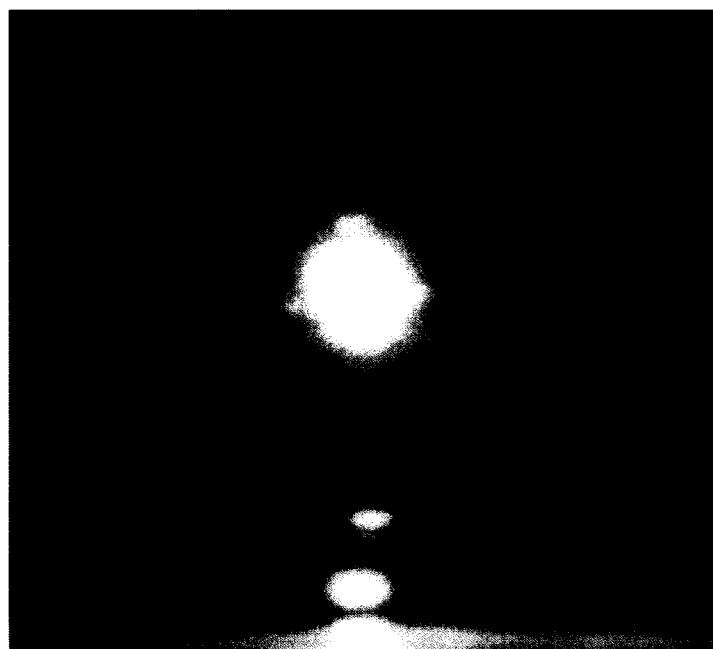
the will to

the soul to

DARE

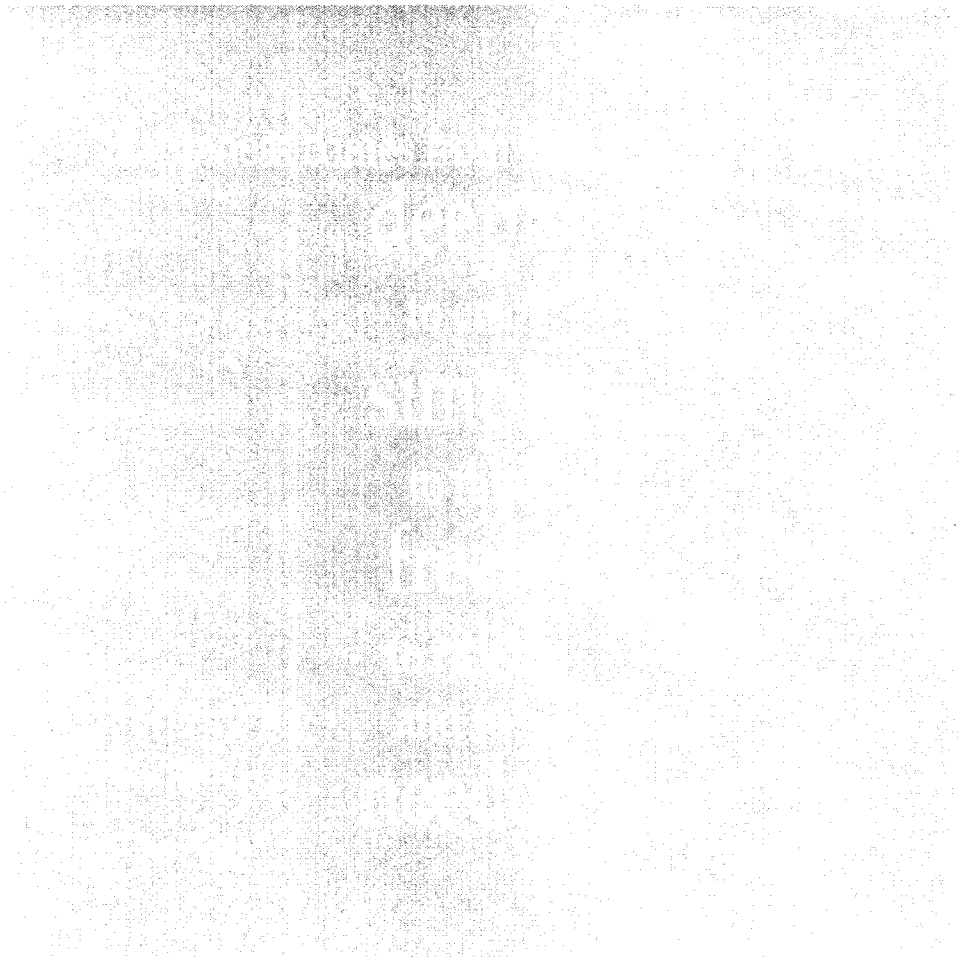


whatever you
can do or **dream**,
begin it. Boldness has
genius, power,
and **magic** in it.



Knowledge does not
come to us by details,
but in flashes of light
from heaven.

the supreme
happiness of life
is the conviction
that we are
loved.





Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood.

**employ your
senses**

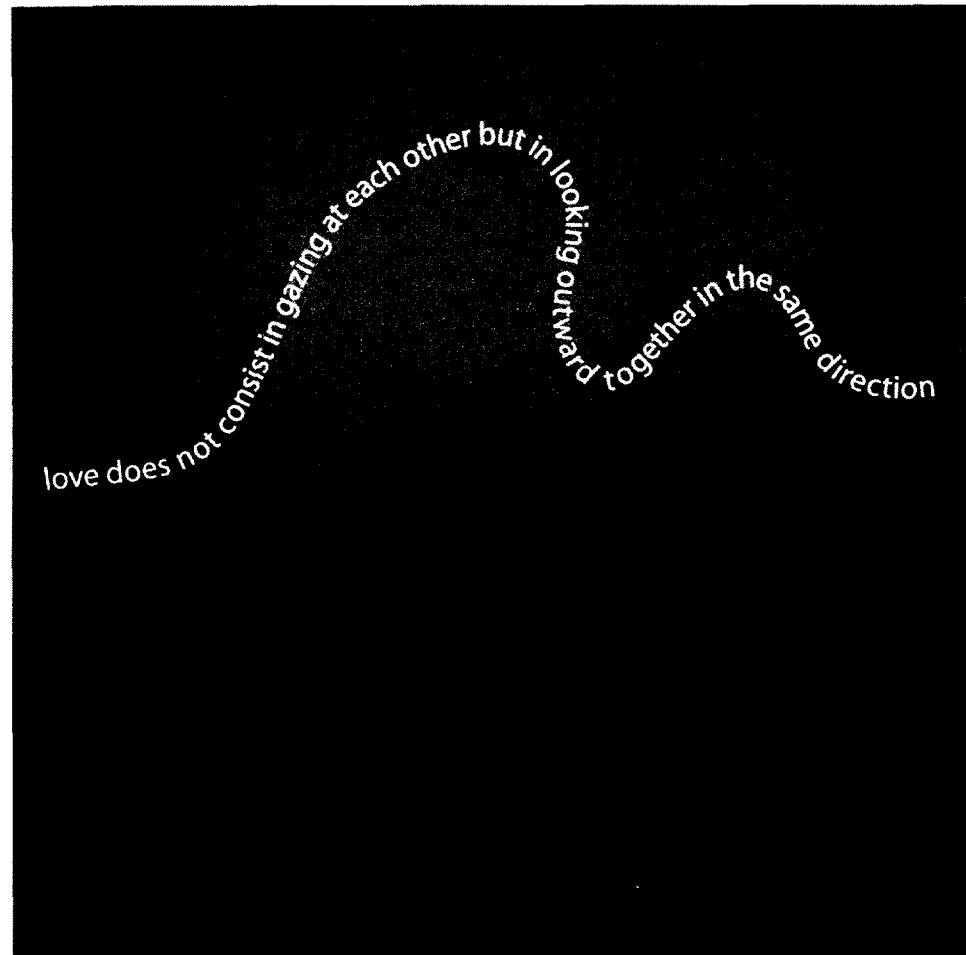
Can machines have souls? You ask me that and I ask you if souls can learn. If they can't--then of what importance is this concept? Sterile and empty and unchangeable for eternity. How much more preferable it is to understand that we create ourselves. Slowly and painfully, shaped basically by our genes, modified steadily by everything we see and hear and attempt to understand. That is the reality and that is how we function, learn and develop.

For man, **unlike any other** thing organic or inorganic **in the universe**,
grows beyond his work, walks up the stairs of his accomplishments ...



Having stepped forward, he may slip back, but only a half a step,
never the full step back.

CARE more than others think is safe.
DREAM more than others think is wise.
EXPECT more than others think is practical.
more than others think is possible.



love does not consist in gazing at each other but in looking outward together in the same direction

Beauty is unbearable, drives us to
despair, offering us for a minute the
glimpse of an eternity that we should
like to stretch out over the whole of time.

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